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# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

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## URBAN'S AXIOLOGICAL SYSTEM

### I

THE recent essays on value by Professor W. M. Urban<sup>1</sup> give one of the most important contemporary discussions in this field. Their author is preeminent in America as a philosopher who has given both prolonged and intensive investigation to the theory of value. At least three careful criticisms of these articles have been published,<sup>2</sup> and Urban has answered two of the criticisms.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless there seems to be need of another criticism. The previous criticisms have been mainly expressions of disagreement concerning one detail or another, but they have given little attention to Urban's system as a unity. The present paper will attempt to envisage Urban's system as a system, and will show that the questionable doctrines in his writings follow logically<sup>4</sup> from one erroneous assumption.

The present writer is in agreement with Urban on the two most important problems in the theory of value. We both believe that value is irreducible to such existential categories as pleasure, satisfaction, or causality. We both believe that value is "objective in the more than social sense"; that is, we believe that the judgment about value gives us objective information.<sup>5</sup> These two points of agreement are so fundamental that other points of disagreement might seem relatively unimportant. There is one problem, however, which leads to very complicated mistakes if it is incorrectly treated. This is the logical problem as to what is the fundamental value category.<sup>6</sup> Urban thinks that "ought" is the fundamental value cate-

<sup>1</sup> "Value and Existence," this JOURNAL, 13: 449-465. "Knowledge of Value and the Value-Judgment," this JOURNAL, 13: 673-687. "Ontological Problems of Value," this JOURNAL, 14: 309-327.

<sup>2</sup> R. B. Perry, this JOURNAL, 14: 169-181. D. W. Fisher, this JOURNAL, 14: 570-582. F. C. Bartlett, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 17: 117-138.

<sup>3</sup> This JOURNAL, 15: 393-405.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Urban is the best judge whether these doctrines were consciously inferred from the one erroneous assumption. Here we are concerned only with the logical implications.

<sup>5</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 683 and 455-460; also 12: 105-106.

<sup>6</sup> This may seem a mere technicality, but, as the following pages will show, a mistake on this point is extraordinarily misleading. This problem is obviously not "just a matter of preference."

gory. This the present writer believes to be false. From this false assumption follow numerous errors in the structure of Urban's "axiology." In the following pages an attempt will be made to show the connection between these errors and the doctrine that "ought" is fundamental. It will be argued that there is error both in the doctrine that "ought" is fundamental and in the doctrines which are suggested thereby. Then it will be shown that the main truths which Urban sees can be maintained by taking betterness as the fundamental value category, and that in this way the difficulties and errors of Urban's system of "axiology" can be abolished.

## II

What is the fundamental value category or universal? Is there only one fundamental category or are there more than one? Most philosophers seem to have assumed rather than argued their answers to these questions. English writers have usually taken the notions of intrinsic goodness and intrinsic badness as fundamental. Sidgwick, despite some variation of opinion in the different editions of the *Methods of Ethics*, took "ought" as fundamental. So Urban takes "ought," or perhaps "ought" and "ought not," as fundamental.<sup>7</sup> The present writer has argued elsewhere that neither goodness nor oughtness can be taken as fundamental, and that the fundamental value universal is intrinsic betterness.<sup>8</sup> A detailed examination of Urban's system of "axiology" will show the many good and sufficient reasons against taking "ought" as fundamental. In fact, one of the chief merits of Urban's work is that it should for all time show the difficulties and errors involved in the assumption that "ought" is fundamental.

When ought is used as a value notion,<sup>9</sup> it may be used in a narrow meaning or it may be used in a wide meaning. Let us consider the narrow meaning first. This is the strictly moral or ethical meaning. As an ethical category ought has the following characteristics.

1. Ought applies only to what is practically possible. "The good is much wider than what we ought to try to produce. There is no reason to doubt that some of the lost tragedies of Æschylus

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes he speaks of "ought to be" as the fundamental (this JOURNAL, 13: 463 and 681). Elsewhere he mentions both "ought" and "ought not" and once he seems to say that "the latter is just as fundamental as the former." This seems to refer to positive and negative value as equally fundamental (this JOURNAL, 13: 675).

<sup>8</sup> This JOURNAL, 16: 96-104.

<sup>9</sup> Of course the purely hypothetical use of ought is not axiological. On this point Urban (15: 401-402) is correct as against Perry (14: 179-180).

were good, but we ought not to try to rewrite them, because we should certainly fail. What we ought to do, in fact, is limited by our powers and opportunities, whereas the good is 'subject to no such limitation.'<sup>10</sup>

2. Ought does not assert either intrinsic value or extrinsic value of its subject, but a combination of both. Whether an action ought to be done depends on whether the totality of that act with its motives and consequences is intrinsically better than the possible alternative totalities.<sup>11</sup> Thus ought indicates what may be called total value, that is, the value of the total situation in which the act occurs.

3. Ought is used in at least three senses, corresponding to the three different but similar meanings of right. It has a subjective usage, a probable or reasonable usage, and an objective or absolute usage. In other words, a complete account of ought must consider the different limitations and extensions of human knowledge in their effect upon the determination of ought.<sup>12</sup>

4. Ought differs from right in that ought implies uniqueness of what is morally permissible, whereas right implies that in the given situation some other act may be equally valuable and therefore also right. Several acts may be as good as possible and therefore right, but if an act ought to be done it is the single best possibility.<sup>13</sup>

These four characteristics of ought have determined many of Urban's doctrines. As we shall see, Urban expressly denies that he is using ought in the narrow ethical sense. But it will be apparent that the characteristics of the ethical sense of ought have influenced him nevertheless.

In the wide sense of ought, it is used in such expressions as "ought to be." It is my contention that this meaning is simply an unfortunately disguised and confusing equivalent for goodness and betterness. This usage has been rather widespread, and occurs even in such writers as G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell.<sup>14</sup> "Ought to be on its own account" is used as the equivalent of intrinsic goodness (or intrinsic positive value, as Urban phrases it). "Ought not to be on its own account" is used for intrinsic badness (or intrinsic negative value). Now the present writer has shown that the notions of intrinsic goodness and badness (or positive and nega-

<sup>10</sup> B. Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, page 6.

<sup>11</sup> C. D. Broad, "The Doctrine of Consequences in Ethics," *The International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1914.

<sup>12</sup> C. D. Broad, same article; also B. Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, pages 16-30.

<sup>13</sup> G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, pages 31-38.

<sup>14</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, page 17; B. Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, pages 5-6.

tive value) are complexes of intrinsic betterness or worseness.<sup>15</sup> If *X* is intrinsically good or has intrinsic positive value, then by definition the being or existence of *X* is intrinsically better than the non-being or non-existence of *X*. If *X* ought to be on its own account, *X* ought to-be rather than not-to-be. But this means that the being of *X* is intrinsically better than the non-being of *X*. So "ought to be" is a complex of betterness. The definitions of intrinsic badness or negative value have been shown to be the exact logical converses of the above definitions.

In his first article,<sup>16</sup> Urban confines himself to the phrases "ought to be" and "ought not to be." But in the two later articles<sup>17</sup> the phrase "ought rather" occurs. What does "ought rather" mean? It is clearly an expression for comparative value. When we are speaking of intrinsic value, the usual comparative notion is "better." How does "ought rather" differ from betterness? Urban nowhere suggests any difference, and it seems clear that "ought rather" means better. The only possible difference that one could suggest is that "ought rather" suggests the narrow ethical meaning, which Urban has explicitly ruled out.

We have now examined both the narrow ethical use of ought and the two wide uses in "ought to be" and "ought rather." All of these notions have been found to be analyzable into disguised forms of betterness or into complexes depending on betterness. So it is clear that our fundamental value notion should be betterness rather than oughtness.

### III

If one takes ought as the fundamental value notion, one must try to meet the general arguments listed above. In addition to these troubles, there are some seven confusions or fallacies in the theory of value, all of which are caused by the treatment of ought as fundamental.

1. Ought encourages the blending or confusing of intrinsic and extrinsic values. Hence the fallacy of assuming that what is true of extrinsic value is true of intrinsic value.

2. If one asks what kinds of objects or entities are in the scale of intrinsic value, that is a plain and specific question. But if one's value notion tends to confuse intrinsic value with extrinsic, instrumental, or contributory values, then one may suppose that every object or entity has *some* value. Hence one falsely concludes that every object or entity is in the scale of *intrinsic* value.

<sup>15</sup> This JOURNAL, 16: 98-99. In those pages and in the present article, "good" is used to mean what Urban calls intrinsic positive value.

<sup>16</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 456, 457, 461, 462.

<sup>17</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 681; also 15: 396.

3. In the ethical sense, what ought to be done has nothing equally good. In other words, oughtness can not be asserted of whatever has an alternative equal in value. Hence one may falsely conclude that no two objects or entities are or can be equal in value.

4. In a specific situation, if action *X* ought to be done, then each of the other alternatives of action *X* ought not to be done. There are no actions *between* ought and ought not. So ought not is the contradictory of ought, but only within the field or universe of discourse of that specific situation. Hence one may falsely conclude that every object or entity which is in the value scale has either intrinsic goodness (positive value) or intrinsic badness (negative value). In this case there would be no indifferent entities in the scale of intrinsic value between the goods and the bads. In other words there would be no objects or entities which are intrinsically better than the bads but intrinsically worse than the goods.

5. Ought is a rather complex term depending on intrinsic betterness. Such "value qualities" as beauty also depend on intrinsic betterness, as we shall see later. If both ought and beauty are analyzed into their dependence on betterness, one will see the distinctness but co-ordinateness of the two notions. If ought is left unanalyzed, the connection between ought and beauty can be only obscured.

6. If ought is taken as fundamental, its relational characteristics will be recognized sometimes, forgotten sometimes. If ought is merely a disguise for betterness, the disguise can do no good but much harm.

7. If ought is taken as fundamental, one imagines the old dichotomy of the Is and the Ought. If one does not reduce the Ought to the Is, then one must suppose that there is some mysterious relation between the Is and the Ought.

Let us consider these seven difficulties as they manifest themselves in Urban's writings.

#### IV

If one takes ought as fundamental, one may say that the meaning is "ought to be on its own account." This meaning, as we have seen, is the same as intrinsic goodness or positive value. But in the vast majority of its uses, ought refers essentially to the value of a further end or a larger totality of which it is an instrument or a part. In its strict moral sense ought refers to the value an act has in relation to the total situation of which it is a part.<sup>18</sup> Consequently the use of ought gives a constant temptation to forget that intrinsic value is the logical basis of the study of value.

<sup>18</sup> For proof, see the above mentioned article by C. D. Broad.

As we might expect, Urban first limits his discussion to intrinsic value or oughtness, but subsequently he seems to forget this distinction in his main arguments. "It need scarcely be said that an ultimate definition of value is concerned only with intrinsic value, all extrinsic or instrumental values going back ultimately to concepts of intrinsic value."<sup>19</sup> Later Urban explains that the relational characteristics of "ought rather" do not do away with the intrinsic nature of value. In intrinsic value we shut out the relation of means to ends but not the relation of more or less.<sup>20</sup> But when Urban argues about value he seems to forget all about the qualification of value as intrinsic. Thus in one passage<sup>21</sup> he asserts that wherever there is interest there is value. Now clearly this is not true of intrinsic value. There are many things which we are interested in only as means or instruments. So if interest is the test of value, these things have only extrinsic value. Yet Urban uses this argument to prove that all objects or entities have a place on the scale of intrinsic<sup>22</sup> value. This fallacy was caused by the confusion of extrinsic values with intrinsic values, and this confusion seems to have been caused by the use of ought as fundamental.<sup>23</sup>

## V

From the confusion of intrinsic and extrinsic values, there follows logically what we may call Urban's Law of Universality. This is the doctrine that "every object has some place in the world of value." "Every object falls under the category of value just as necessarily as under the category of being."<sup>24</sup> In other words, no object or entity (whether existent or not) is "value-free."

We must distinguish two possible interpretations of this law. In the light of its context and the use which Urban makes of it, it seems to mean that every object has a place in the scale of *intrinsic* value.<sup>25</sup> On this interpretation the law would be very important, if true. But we shall see that it is not true. On the other interpretation, Urban may mean merely that every object has *some*

<sup>19</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 452.

<sup>20</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 681.

<sup>21</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 675-676.

<sup>22</sup> He does not say on this page whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic value. But the context clearly requires the assumption that he is proving something about intrinsic value.

<sup>23</sup> Another instance of the confusion of intrinsic and extrinsic values is found in the remark that "we can deduce the value of an object from its nature as little as we can its existence" (13: 674).

<sup>24</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 685 and 675-677.

<sup>25</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 452-460 and 681.

*value*. In this case, the law would perhaps be true, but too unimportant for the use which Urban makes of it. Urban nowhere explicitly states which interpretation should be followed, but we may reject this second interpretation for the following reason. To say that an object has *some* value may mean either that the object is itself in the scale of intrinsic value or it may mean that the object has certain relations to something else which is in the scale of intrinsic value. If an object has no value intrinsically but is a cause or a part of something which is in the scale of intrinsic value, then the object may be called extrinsically valuable. I know of no proof that every object is actually a cause or a part of an intrinsic value, but clearly every object might be such. But this is unimportant. It is surely a trivial assertion to say that every object is or might be either in the scale of intrinsic value or among the causes or parts of intrinsic values. What we wish to learn from a study of value is knowledge concerning what objects are in the scale of intrinsic value and what are their comparative values. So we are forced to conclude that Urban means not his second interpretation, but the first one to the effect that every object is in the scale of intrinsic value.

Urban's proof for this law of universality is as follows:<sup>26</sup> "All objects, as objects, are of interest either actually or potentially, and wherever there is interest there is value." Several objections might be made to this argument, but the most important objection is as follows: If we grant that interest proves value,<sup>27</sup> what sort of value does any sort of interest prove? Does it prove intrinsic value? It seems that there are many objects which we are interested in only as means, instruments, or parts. So this type of interest can not prove intrinsic value but only extrinsic value. If we were interested in objects only on their own account and never on account of their results, the present objection would be out of place. To argue from the assumed universality of interest of any sort to the universality of intrinsic value is clearly fallacious.

I know of no valid proof that every object is in the scale of intrinsic value. This is no place to argue the very difficult problem concerning the inclusions and exclusions of the scale of intrinsic value, but let us consider a few examples. Urban likes to dwell on Meinong's "round square," an impossible object but one to which Urban attributes value.<sup>28</sup> Probably few people have attributed value to round squares. Of course the mental process of thinking about

<sup>26</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 675-676.

<sup>27</sup> Surely Urban should give some proof for this assumption, since he does not agree with Perry that value is to be defined in relation to interest.

<sup>28</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 676 and 679.



round squares did have a certain extrinsic value (positive or negative) in the formation of the theories of Meinong and Urban. But do round squares themselves have any intrinsic value? The present writer must confess his inability to think of them as being intrinsically better or worse than anything. Then let us consider the rather numerous numbers. Does every number have a place in the scale of intrinsic value? Does 12 have intrinsic positive value and does 13 have intrinsic negative value? It would be unfair to ask Urban to give the relative value of all numbers, but surely he should explain the value of the more frequent numbers. Or shall we not say that the scale of intrinsic value does not include numbers among its members? So there are some objects of thought which are not in the scale of intrinsic value, and Urban's law is false.

## VI

What may be called the law of inequality is stated by Urban in the following terms: "Of any two values one must be greater than the other."<sup>29</sup> "When any two value objects are brought into relation, one must be higher than the other."<sup>30</sup> Urban seems to think that this follows logically from the fact that values form a "system of higher and lower."<sup>31</sup> But of course the logic of relations and series does not warrant any such inference. There are "series of levels" in which the members of any given "level" are in some specified sense equal or equivalent to one another.<sup>32</sup> In other series this is not the case. So it is a purely empirical question to be investigated whether or not the value scale is a series of levels. Consequently Urban's supposed law is entirely without proof.

Apparently Urban was led into this theory by the following facts. In dealing with the moral use of ought, we say that *X* ought to be done only if the doing of *X* stands out as better than every alternative. If another alternative is just as good, we say that either is *right*.<sup>33</sup> So if an act ought to be done, no other act can be equally good. On the supposition that ought is the fundamental value notion, the law of inequality would perhaps be plausible.<sup>34</sup>

Empirically it must be admitted that many objects *seem* to be

<sup>29</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 677-678.

<sup>30</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 677.

<sup>31</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 677.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, J. Royce in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Vol. I., pages 118-119.

<sup>33</sup> G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, pages 31-38.

<sup>34</sup> G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, pages 35-36. Even if ought were fundamental, it might still be the case that two actions which ought not to be done were equally objectionable, and so equal in value.

equally valuable. It would require strong proof to offset this seeming. No proof has been given.<sup>35</sup>

## VII

There is another doctrine which we may call the law of duality. This is stated by Urban as part of his law of universality, but it is really separate in meaning. According to this theory every object in the world of value is of positive or negative value. There is nothing in between the goods or positive values and the bads or negative values.<sup>36</sup> Let us restate this law. We may say that there is no entity which is intrinsically better than every intrinsic bad, but intrinsically worse than every intrinsic good. Is this law true?

Urban himself gives no proof for this law. But it would follow logically from the following facts about ought. Among the alternatives in a moral choice, there are none which come *between* the act which ought to be done and the acts which ought not to be done. Inside the group of those alternatives, whatever is not *what ought to be done* is *what ought not to be done*. So here a law of duality does hold. But this does not prove that intrinsic positive value or goodness is the contradictory of negative value or badness.<sup>37</sup> Other proof there is none.

Urban's law of duality might be proved by his law of inequality. But, as we have seen this law of inequality is false. An entity is indifferent, in the sense of being between the intrinsic goods and the bads, if its being or existence is intrinsically equal in value to its non-being or non-existence. This would mean that its being is neither better nor worse intrinsically than its non-being.<sup>38</sup> But if nothing is equal in value to anything else, then nothing could be indifferent in this sense. The notion of indifference within the value scale is defined by value equality, so if there were no value equality there would be no indifference in this sense. Since we have seen that there is value equality, there may be indifference within the value scale.

It seems clear that bare negativity, non-being, or non-existence (however these categories are explained) can never involve either intrinsic goodness or intrinsic badness. Yet merely negative facts seem to be on the scale of intrinsic value. Concerning an intrinsic evil we say that its non-existence would be better intrinsically than

<sup>35</sup> Note the reference to "equivalence" in Urban's earlier *Valuation*, page 142.

<sup>36</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 675.

<sup>37</sup> As Fisher has pointed out (this JOURNAL, 14: 574), there is a plain inconsistency in Urban's remarks on this point.

<sup>38</sup> This JOURNAL, 16: 98-99.

its existence. Its non-existence is neither good nor bad intrinsically, but is between the goods and the bads. So the law of duality can not be true.<sup>39</sup>

### VIII

If ought is left unanalyzed and "fundamental," then its relation to the other value categories is seriously obscured. As an example, let us consider beauty and its relation to ought. Now ought depends on betterness but on total betterness. Ought can be determined only when reflection has investigated the consequences of an act and reckoned with all of the ascertainable values. Beauty is a category not involving total values in this way. If the contemplation of a work of art has intrinsic value, we may say that the work of art is beautiful irrespective of the moral, economic, or other consequences involved. So a work of art may be beautiful even though it may be condemned as a work which ought not to be produced or contemplated. The esthetic judgment deals with the intrinsic value of a somewhat isolated experience and it neglects the extrinsic or instrumental values which may be involved. Thus both ought and beauty depend on intrinsic betterness but in quite different ways.<sup>40</sup> The difference is that ought is based on a wider survey of values. Hence it may be argued that if ought and beauty conflict (that is, if a beautiful object ought not to be produced or contemplated), beauty must give way as the narrower concept.

Urban misunderstands this complicated relationship, and says that beauty is a subjective "quality" which is felt, whereas ought is something objectively judged.<sup>41</sup> But there is an esthetic judgment as well as an esthetic feeling, and there is a feeling of oughtness as well as a judgment of oughtness. Urban seems to treat ought as being on an entirely different plane from beauty. Beauty, he thinks, is a subjective value quality, whereas ought is objective value. But since both ought and beauty are analyzable (though in different

<sup>39</sup> Urban's remarks on the value of non-existence are partially based on a natural misunderstanding of a sentence by the present writer in a one page abstract (this JOURNAL, 12: 105-106). I had said: "All facts about non-existence are equal in value. (Equal in value means neither better nor worse.)" Urban quotes this once in a slightly altered form (13: 678). Then he changes it entirely in the quotation: "All facts about non-existence are neither better nor worse" (13: 679). My own doctrine is: "all of the negative or non-existential facts in the value scale are indifferent or neither good nor bad" intrinsically. (This JOURNAL, 16: 98.) Equal in value may be defined to mean neither better nor worse *than one another*. Obviously one would not assert value equality of what is entirely outside the scale of value.

<sup>40</sup> For a very brief discussion, see this JOURNAL, 16: 102-103.

<sup>41</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 456.

ways) into complexes of intrinsic betterness, it is clear that no such difference of kind can be found between them. Urban has been misled here by his assumption that ought is a fundamental and unanalyzable value category.

## IX

In his first article Urban speaks only of "ought to be," but in the two later articles he speaks of "ought rather." Now "ought rather" is clearly a relation. If value is a relation, surely the notion of betterness is the clearest and simplest to use. The conception of intrinsic betterness is easily distinguished from extrinsic values, and none of the "moral" limitations of ought are involved. If one uses better as fundamental,<sup>42</sup> one will always be conscious of the relational character of value, and one can study and analyze value according to the facts of the logic of relations. As far as "ought rather" differs from better, it differs only to disguise and confuse the facts.<sup>43</sup>

There are times when Urban's language almost makes him agree that betterness and not ought is the fundamental value notion. He says explicitly that *ought is deduced from betterness*.<sup>44</sup> But clearly one does not deduce ought from better, unless better is more fundamental.

Urban even says in one place<sup>45</sup> that "the relation 'better than' can be seen to lie in the nature of value as such." Yet this admission is never followed up. That better is fundamental is half seen, but there is little realization as yet of the consequences of this admission.

## X

Urban analyzes the conceptions of existence and reality. But since he takes ought as fundamental and unanalyzed, he becomes entangled in the old mystifying opposition between the Is and the Ought. To summarize and criticize all of the debatable points in Urban's rather lengthy third article<sup>46</sup> would be impossible here. Urban himself recognizes the difficulties and "antinomies" in his discussion. So we may confine ourselves to a short positive discussion of those points on which light is thrown by the theory that value is a relation.

If value is not subjective, then value is in some sense real. The feeling of value implies the feeling of the reality of the value cate-

<sup>42</sup> Or the notion of "worse." See this JOURNAL, 16: 97.

<sup>43</sup> As the previous pages should have shown. Incidentally it may be mentioned that ought is a one-many relation, whereas better is a many-many relation.

<sup>44</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 681; 14: 315, note 19; 15: 396.

<sup>45</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 681.

<sup>46</sup> This JOURNAL, 14: 309-327.

gory.<sup>47</sup> About this real or objective value there may be true knowledge in what may be called value judgments. These value judgments will be true or false in the same general way that other judgments are true or false. But they will differ in that they refer to the value relation rather than to such relations as time or causality. They may also differ in their psychological antecedents from such judgments as those of sense-perception. But they are not to be contrasted with "truth-judgments."

The complete object of a judgment, may, following Meinong, be called an "objective."<sup>48</sup> Then a judgment about value will refer to an objective, which includes what we mean by value. But this calls for analysis. When we judge that *X* is intrinsically better than *Y*, *X* and *Y* may be called value-objects, but by value we mean the relation of betterness which holds between *X* and *Y*. Value is a relation, not an objective.<sup>49</sup> Relations are real, and the value relation betterness is real. I see nothing mystifying in this.

If the value relation is real, must the two terms of the relation be actual existents? Clearly not, as Urban admits.<sup>50</sup> Doubtless the judgment of value arises in the comparison of actual experience, but it is soon extended to objects of thought and imagination. It is even extended to mutually exclusive alternatives of action, only one of which can be actualized. We may properly value what never actually exists, but of course our valuation is based upon our experiences of actualities. So the elements of what we value must have been actually experienced. But the specific construction may be new. Thus in a Utopia, the total condition valued may never exist in the past, present, or future, but the elements used in describing the Utopia are drawn from experiences of actual existents.

If ought is taken as fundamental, one might assume that value implies possibility, because the moral use of ought implies that the action which ought to be done is possible. But this would be fallacious. It is certainly clear that both of two valued objects may not be "compossible."

Since judgments about value refer to the real relation of betterness, we can have no complete account of realities (or Reality, if you please) without an account of value.

As to the value of the whole of reality, there are some preliminary questions? Can we make judgments about the whole of reality? How would such judgments deal with the difficulties at the basis of

<sup>47</sup> See Urban's *Valuation*, page 22.

<sup>48</sup> The word "objective" is unfortunate as suggesting the subjective-objective controversy.

<sup>49</sup> Urban seems almost to admit this, this JOURNAL, 13: 681.

<sup>50</sup> This JOURNAL, 13: 463, and 14: 319.

Russell's theory of logical types?<sup>51</sup> There is no reason why value may not be ascribed to facts about totalities, but only about totalities which are capable of being judged.<sup>52</sup>

As to "degree of reality," anyone can use the word reality in a eulogistic sense. The question to be asked is whether or not such usage leads to clear or confused thinking. Urban seems to think that this usage is necessitated by the law of universality, that every object is in the value scale. But we have seen that this law is false. It must be insisted also that logical importance is not the same as intrinsic value. These two points undermine Urban's proofs.<sup>53</sup> I doubt if we know enough about either metaphysics or "axiology" to be able to give a trustworthy discussion at present.

## XI

With this very fragmentary criticism of Urban's doctrine of reality and value, the present set of criticisms is ended. We have seen that the central flaw in Urban's system of value is the assumption that ought is the fundamental value category. We have seen the numerous errors and fallacies which almost inevitably follow from this false assumption. But to make these criticisms must not be taken as a condemnation of Urban's work. Not only is Urban correct in his fundamental doctrines of the indefinability and reality of value. The system he has worked out is a remarkable help in showing exactly what are all the main consequences for "axiology" of the attempt to take ought as fundamental. The clear thinking out of one point of view, even though it contains an element of error, is more helpful to the advancement of knowledge than the usual doctrines which are not thoroughly thought through.

If Urban were to accept what might be called "meliorism," the doctrine that intrinsic betterness is the fundamental value category, his entire system would need going over. Corrections in many places would be required. But the main outlines of his work would remain, only bettered.

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<sup>51</sup> A. N. Whitehead and B. Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, Vol. I., Ch. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Note the strange opposition between Urban and Fisher, this JOURNAL, 13: 454 and 14: 575.

<sup>53</sup> This JOURNAL, 14: 326 and 327.